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Eastern District of California

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SACRAMENTO BANK FRAUD DEFENDANT SENTENCED TO NEARLY FOUR YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

Defendant recruited nephew and daughter-in-law to open sham bank accounts to deposit forged credit card checks stolen from mail

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that AARON DARNEL RUNNER, 46, of Sacramento, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Morrison C. England, Jr. to 46 months in federal prison and a term of five years supervision on release from prison. The defendant pleaded guilty on May 22, 2008 to multiple counts of bank fraud and conspiracy to commit bank fraud, as well as to unauthorized use of a credit card and possession of stolen mail.

This case is the product of an extensive, joint investigation by the United States Postal Inspection Service.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Lawrence Brown, who prosecuted the case, shortly after release on parole in 2005, defendant RUNNER recruited a nephew, co-defendant EDWARD JAMES TALLEY and a daughter-in-law, co-defendant CHARLENE MITCHELL, to open bank accounts in Sacramento and Carmichael for the sole purpose of depositing forged credit card access checks. The checks had been stolen from residential mailboxes in Orangevale and Carmichael by RUNNER and other individuals. RUNNER then forged the blank credit card access checks, making them payable to either TALLEY or MITCHELL. The checks then would be deposited into the TALLEY's or MITCHELL's bank accounts, creating balances from which cash could then be withdrawn. In one such transaction, RUNNER forged a check for \$6,000. The total amount of falsified checks exceeded \$40,000, with approximately \$7,000 in cash successfully withdrawn before RUNNER was caught. Judge England ordered the defendant to pay restitution.

Charges against TALLEY and MITCHELL are still pending, and they are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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